

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 06447 211128Z

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ACTION CU-03

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS ALSO TO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, OEXC, PO, ETRD

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENT TOUR GROUP

1. LOCAL TOURIST AGENCY SPECIALIZING IN STUDENT AND UNION TOURS HAS REQUESTED EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING U.S. AGENT WHO COULD ASSIST IN PROGRAMMING STUDENT GROUPS IN U.S. MARCH 30 - APRIL 10, 1977. AGENCY PROJECTS CHARTER FLIGHT OF 170 STUDENTS FROM VARIOUS PORTUGUESE UNIVERSITIES TO BOSTON AND NEW ENGLAND AREA.

2. SENIOR CLASS TRIPS ABROAD ARE WELL ESTABLISHED CUSTOM IN PORTUGAL. SAME AGENCY ARRANGED VISIT OF UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA CHOIR TO U.S. IN 1972. HOWEVER, THIS IS FIRST STUDENT EXCURSION PLANNED TO U.S. SINCE 1974 REVOLUTION AND IS INDICATION OF RENEWED STUDENT INTEREST IN VISITING U.S. AND WESTERN EUROPE IN SPITE OF AVAILABILITY OF SUBSIDIZED TRAVEL TO COMMUNIST COUNTRIES.

3. CHARTER CONTRACT NOT YET ARRANGED BUT AGENCY IN PAST HAS DEALT WITH PANAM, TWA, AND TAP. AGENCY STATES THAT FLIGHT CARRYING STUDENTS TO US MARCH 30 WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO CARRY CHARTER GROUP FROM US TO PORTUGAL ON RETURN TRIP. SAME TRUE OF APRIL 10 ROUND TRIP.

4. LOCAL AGENCY IS TURICOOP, RUA DON PASCOAL MEIO 15
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PAGE 02 LISBON 06447 211128Z

- 1, LISBOA 1, TELEPHONE 53 18 04. DIRECTOR IS JOSE DA

COSTA ANTUNES. AGENCY ALSO PROJECTING ADDITIONAL CHARTER TRIPS AUGUST 21-31 AND AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 10, 1977.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THERE IS VOLUNTARY AGENCY IN NEW YORK WHICH SPECIALIZES IN ARRANGING PROGRAMS FOR STUDENT TOUR GROUPS. DEPARTMENT MAY BE ABLE TO SUGGEST ADDITIONAL ALTERNATIVES.

6. EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT FAVORABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT WOULD BE CREATED HERE IF U.S. LABOR UNION COULD BE INTERESTED IN CHARTERING RETURN FLIGHTS FOR "APRIL IN PORTUGAL" EXCURSION. UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME SUCH WORKER GROUPS HAVE COME EXCLUSIVELY FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND SCANDINAVIA. GROUP OF VACATIONING WORKERS FROM U.S. WOULD BE SEEN AS EVIDENCE OF U.S. LABOR SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT AND UNIONS IN PORTUGAL. EMBASSY EXPECTS THAT U.S. GROUP WOULD MAKE MARKED CONTRAST WITH GROUPS OF SOVIET TOURISTS WHO MARCH STOLIDLY THROUGH THE FREE WINERY TOURS AND ARE NOTORIOUSLY POOR SPENDERS. TURICOOP WILLING TO ARRANGE ACCOMMODATIONS AND PROGRAM IN PORTUGAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH WISHES OF U.S. SPONSORS.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT OF STATE IS REQUESTED TO PROVIDE THE NAMES OF ONE OR MORE AGENCIES WHO COULD WORK DIRECTLY WITH THE PORTUGUESE TRAVEL AGENCY IN PROGRAMMING STUDENT TOURS IN THE UNITED STATES. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IS REQUESTED TO CONSIDER RAISING WITH APPROPRIATE U.S. TRADE UNION OFFICIALS THE POSSIBILITY OF VACATION CHARTER FLIGHTS TO PORTUGAL FOR THEIR MEMBERS. THE EMBASSY PROPOSES ONLY TO PASS TO THE LOCAL TOURIST AGENT INFORMATION REGARDING U.S. ORGANIZATIONS AND UNIONS WHICH MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN THESE PROGRAMS. IT WOULD BE UP TO THE ORGANIZATIONS THEMSELVES TO ESTABLISH CONTACT AND AGREE UPON TERMS. NO ADDITIONAL U.S. GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IS ENVISIONED IN THE FUTURE.
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